

## 2006 WorkFirst Local Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) Plan

*Whidbey LPA*

*"The best time to help a family is the minute they arrive to apply for WorkFirst assistance. At that time, there should be a coordinated complete evaluation and assessment".*

Governor Gregoire's *Directive To Implement WorkFirst Reform*

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Everyone has skills and abilities needed in today's workforce. Weaving those skills and abilities with labor market realities and education levels is the cornerstone of the new Comprehensive Evaluation (CE). The CE process is a way to engage families quickly and get them participating in the appropriate activities to prepare them for employment and economic self-sufficiency.

### Description of the Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) elements:

- **Foundation:** Conducted by a DSHS case manager, the foundation gathers family information and circumstances that can impact the parent's participation and contributes to the development of an employment plan. It is similar to the current Screening and Evaluation. The Social Service Assessment will occur for those parents who are pregnant or have issues such as family violence or substance abuse. They will be referred to a social worker for an assessment as part of the CE.
- **Education:** Conducted by community and technical college staff, this section of the CE examines a parent's educational and training background and interests and uses the CASAS appraisal of basic skill levels to contribute to the employment plan.
- **Work Skills:** Conducted by an Employment Security WorkSource Specialist, the Work Skills evaluation examines work skills, interests and values and ties these to local labor market information to define career options and choices.
- **Employment Plan:** Based on information gathered from the foundation, education and work skills elements of the CE, ESD staff, along with the parent, will complete an Employment Plan and make recommendations for employment pathway activities.
- **Plan Review and IRP Development:** Together with the parent, the DSHS case manager will review the employment plan, consider the recommendations, special records and other relevant information and develop the Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP).

Note: The information obtained through the CE will be available to partners through e-JAS, with the exception of "Special Records".

The CE will be a key tool in leading parents directly to employment since job search will continue to be the most appropriate pathway for the majority of parents. For other parents, the CE will lead to employment through education or Community Jobs. In some instances parents will receive services to help resolve issues, while participating in work related activities.

### Primary objectives of the Comprehensive Evaluation (CE): (partnership)

- Better information about parents' skills and abilities and quicker placement in an employment pathway.
- Increased parent involvement in developing their plan for participation, resulting in more parent 'buy-in' and better results.
- More consistency in how the program operates across the state through stronger program standards.
- More objective decision making based on clearer program criteria.
- Placement of parents in the most appropriate activities to move them quickly toward employment and self-sufficiency.

**The following documents have been included to support the development of your local CE Plan:**

- CE Planning Questions
- Comprehensive Evaluation Standards
- Partner Roles and Responsibilities
- CE Process Flow Template

**Developing your local Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) Plan:**

Partnership will be key in developing and implementing an effective CE process for parents. As you develop your local CE Plan, be thinking about what partners, services and resources will be needed. Partners to consider – Community Jobs (CJ) contractors, WDC's, EDC's, faith based organizations, tribes, LEP contractors, non-profit organizations, businesses, etc. Each community has unique resources and expertise that should be considered as you develop your plan to meet statewide standards, while providing valuable experience for parents.

Communication and good working relationships with partners will be critical in developing a CE process that can successfully be implemented and operationalized. This will be especially challenging for partnerships in urban communities where there are multiple CSO's, CTC's and WorkSource or ESD offices.

If your partnership is responsible for other local plans, including a WDC and/or DSHS Regional Plans, be sure to consider how those plans intersect, leverage, support, duplicate or conflict with your CE Plan and how you will collaboratively achieve the goals of multiple plans.

Having a "pro-active" strategy in place to rapidly address "challenges or barriers" during the CE implementation and/or operation phase, will be important. Include in your local CE Plan what action steps will be taken to address challenges quickly, so that parents can get the full benefits of the CE.

**Local Comprehensive Evaluation (CE) Plan:**

Your CE Plan needs to fully address how local partners will implement the CE. As you develop your local CE process, be thinking about the roles and responsibilities of partners to provide the CE while meeting the CE Standards (refer to attached document). Should you identify "gaps" in services or resources, be thinking of ways your community can leverage other existing services and/or resources to address those gaps.

**Fully describe your local CE process by answering the following list of questions based on the CE Standards.** You may want to include a flow chart of your local process.

1. Please list the local DSHS, ESD and CTC agency partners that will be participating in the CE process in your local area (i.e. specific CSO(s), WorkSource site(s) and CTC(s)).
  - *If CJ contractors or other community partners are participants please list and explain their roles.*
  - *If a CTC is not located in an area, how will the college ensure that the educational interview and CASAS appraisal is provided?*
  - **Agency partners Oak Harbor CSO, Skagit Valley College, Employment Security Department.**
  - **Locations: Oak Harbor CSO, WorkSource Whidbey, Skagit Valley College.**
2. Describe how child care and needed support services will be handled at the time of application (Positive Prevention Services) to help ensure that parents can participate in the CE process without delay.
  - **The parent will be asked at the reception counter to describe their circumstances and needs before they are given a TANF appointment. At this time any resources that can help the parent make a better choice than TANF will be provided, including Basic Food, medical, child care or an outside resource.**

- Immediate referrals will be made to the WCCC child care worker located in the Oak Harbor CSO. The WCCC application Part 1 will be completed and a packet given to the applicant. The case manager will explore with the parent the availability of transportation and attempt to resolve any issue.
3. Describe where each of the CE elements -- listed above and in the standards -- will be conducted (e.g. CSO, WorkSource, college, other).
- The CE elements will begin at the Oak Harbor CSO where the Foundation piece will take place. The parent will be referred to a Social Worker if it appears there are serious issues such as Domestic Violence, medical issues, drug/alcohol issues or mental health issues. When the Social Worker feels the parent is able to participate the parent will return to the CE process.
  - See number 4 for location of each element. .
4. Describe how each element of the CE will be conducted (e.g. individual interview, group process, group or individual testing etc.)
- *List primary assessment tools (and any additional tools) that will be used by each of the partners. CSD staff will use the CE Foundation evaluation and Social Service Assessment in eJAS – these do not need to be listed. ESD should document the Work Skills Assessment tool they will use and any secondary assessment tools. The CTCs do not need to list the CASAS Appraisal since it is required. However, CTCs should list other assessment tools such as ASSET, COMPAS, Work Readiness Credential, WorkKeys, etc. and explain when they would use these assessment tools.*
  - The CSO begins the CE foundation process, and it will be done individually at the CSO. When the CE has been completed by the college and Employment Security the results will be provided to the case manager by Employment Security. The case manager will meet and develop the IRP with the parent based on the results and recommendations from the comprehensive evaluation and consideration of any special records information.
  - CASAS testing will be done at Skagit Valley College, Whidbey Branch, WorkSource Whidbey, or at the Oak Harbor CSO depending on space available. The CASAS will be done once a week on Tuesday in a group setting, followed by a one on one educational interest interview.
  - Employment Security Department Work Skills Assessment (WSA). The primary assessment tool used in the WSA will be Choices CT and WSA will be conducted at WorkSource Whidbey. The WSA will be conducted on Monday afternoon. The capacity of the WSA will be limited to eight participants, because of the size of the computer lab at WorkSource Whidbey. A one –on-one WSA interview of the Choices CT results, completion of the Steps to Employment Plan and final CE recommendations will be conducted the following Thursday morning. The WSA one-on-one interview will be conducted on a first come first served basis.
5. Describe how your local CE process will meet the completion time frame standards (an average of 10 work days to complete CE and no more than 30 calendar days from TANF application to participation in a pathway activity).

- *Include when or how often each element of the CE will be conducted to ensure that adequate evaluation opportunities are available to meet parents' needs and the program standards.*
  - *Explain how the social service assessment, when required, will be completed within the above timeframe.*
  - *When program criteria for emergent issues indicate the parent needs to be "temporarily deferred" from completion of the CE, describe how your area will insure that parents are re-involved in CE as soon as possible.*
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- The foundation piece of the CE will be conducted at the CSO at every interview for TANF. The WSA will be given every Monday afternoon. CASAS will be administered by the college followed by a one on one educational interest interview on Tuesday. A one-on-one WSA interview of the Choices CT results, completion of the Steps to Employment Plan and final CE recommendation will be conducted the following Thursday morning. The WSA one-on-one will be conducted on a first come first served basis. It is possible to complete the CE in 10 days, but there are certainly some tough challenges.
  - If the parent needs a Social Service assessment the parent will be referred right away to the Social Worker who will see the parent the same day or be scheduled within two days of initial interview.
  - The parent will be referred to a Social Worker if it does not appear the parent is able to complete the CE. The Social Worker will refer the parent if needed to a domestic abuse counselor, drug/alcohol or doctor is needed. When the parent is able to participate he/she will be referred back to the case manager. The connection to the Social Worker will be the same day or within two days of initial interview.
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6. Does your local area intend to include "enhancements" to the CE process beyond the required minimum standards (i.e. Family Literacy, soft skills, Dependable Strengths)? If yes, please describe your plans.
    - We are not including enhancements at this time.
  7. Describe how line staff will communicate and coordinate during the CE process.
    - *Explain how line staff will resolve issues when there are differing partner views on the most appropriate pathway for a parent.*
    - Communication with line staff will involve Telephone, E-Jas, e-mail, face to face and joint staff meetings.
    - Case staffings with the parent and partners would be the most beneficial for resolving a difference of opinion for a pathway. This would give the parent an opportunity to make there own choice. Case staffings without the parent would be beneficial to get other ideas if parent is not available.
  8. How will your local partnership pro-actively address challenges during CE start-up and on-going phases?
    - We will proactively address challenges during CE start-up and on-going with an open mind. We will deal with each circumstance as it comes up. We will have face to face meetings and telephone conferences that includes all involved partners. Working out problems has always been one of our best practices in Oak Harbor.

**Signatures:**

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Community Service Office

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DSHS Regional Administrator

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Skagit Valley College

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Employment Security Department

Considerations for Local CE Implementation: (Not requirements of your CE Plan)

- What do your local community resources for transportation and child care availability look like?
- If you do not have a local community or technical college, what other local partner will be involved in providing the educational evaluations as part of the CE?
- If you do not have a local WorkSource, where will you offer the CE?
- How will you incorporate "parent involvement" in decision-making and preparing parent options?
- How will you ensure consistency and objectivity when providing the CE?
- If your local CE process includes "enhancement" activities offered by partners, how will you ensure that they are provided within the CE timeframe? "Enhancement" activities need to support the goals of the CE.
- What kinds of specific supports would help your partnership successfully implement the CE, examples technical assistance, information, training, funding and/or other resources?

Note: As your local partnership prepares for implementation of the WorkFirst Reforms, be thinking how the WorkFirst LPA Liaison and other partnership experts can support you. The recent Local Promising Ideas and Practices (PIPs) document shared at the Partners for Change statewide meeting is now available on the WorkFirst website and contains many examples of successful practices that could help you as you implement your local CE process.

Local CE Training and Education Opportunities:

More TANF parents maybe participating in training and education as the appropriate employment pathway based on the CE. Local partners will need to be well informed of CTC programs and capacity of those programs, including CJST, HWHHD and Vocational Education (VE). Be thinking how basic skills courses, developmental education courses, parent education, soft skills, etc. could be packaged to engage parents, while they wait to begin their training or education plan.

Note: These programs do not have to be credit bearing and maybe provided by partners other than the CTC's.

Local CE Performance and Accountability:

Sub 2 members will use GMAP as the measurement system to closely monitor all WorkFirst program performance. It is the responsibility of all local partners to work together to meet the WorkFirst performance measures. Local programs will be monitored closely at the state level for consistency and objectivity across the state. Additional WorkFirst GMAP measures are being developed and will be available soon on the WorkFirst website at

[www.workfirst.wa.gov](http://www.workfirst.wa.gov).

Proposed measures:

Local CE Plan Signatures and Regional Support:

Partnership signatures are required as part of the CE Plan. Be sure and attach a list of your local partner signatures to your final CE Plan. Plans submitted that do not have signatures from your local DSHS, ESD, CTC(s) and Community Jobs administrators will be returned.

Your DSHS Regional Administrator must review all local CE Plans. This will provide them an opportunity to engage with the planning process and mitigate challenges for successful implementation. **CE Plans are due April 28, 2006 by 5:00 pm.** Send both a hard and electronic copy of your plan to Kelly Lindseth (see address below). Please be sure to electronically copy your agency representative.

Kelly Lindseth  
Community, Trade and Economic Development  
128 - 10th Avenue SW  
P.O. Box 42525  
Olympia, WA 98504-2525

Once plans have been received, they will be reviewed by the WorkFirst Operational Partners (TOP) and presented to the Sub 2 members for final approval. Local CE Plans that do not meet the CE Standards will be returned to the LPAs for additional work. All approved plans will be made available on the WorkFirst website.